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LETTER DATED 20 JANUARY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of an incident that took place on 14 January 1997. At 1300 hours on that day a United States frigate carried out a search of the Iraqi fishing vessel Shatt al-Arab at a point four nautical miles south of Mina' al-Bakr. Personnel from the frigate searched all parts of the vessel and inspected its water and fuel tanks before leaving at 1410 hours.

I request your intervention with the United States Government with a view to halting the repeated acts of aggression being committed by United States warships against Iraqi civilian vessels. They are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and public international law, and they have the effect of creating a state of tension in the region instead of promoting its security.

I also affirm the legally established right of the Republic of Iraq to seek compensation for the damage caused to its property by these unwarranted United States actions, in accordance with the principle of State responsibility.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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